

HIGHLIGHTS

New Department Strategic Plan Addresses Substance Abuse Prevention

- A new Missouri Department of Mental Health Strategic Plan was developed in 2001 (22). The plan places a high priority on the prevention of substance abuse and other mental health problems. Key objectives for the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse are to delay onset of use of alcohol and other drugs by Missouri youth and to reduce binge drinking among college students. Baseline rates for these objectives were established in 2001. Based on the Missouri 2000 Student Survey, the average age of first use of alcohol among Missouri youth in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 is 12.77 years of age. The average age of first use of cigarettes is 12.18 years, and the average age of first marijuana use is 13.63 years. Through prevention programming, the Division's goal is to increase these average ages of first use over the next several years. According to a survey conducted at ten public colleges and universities in Missouri in 2001, 47.6% of the students surveyed consumed at least five alcoholic drinks on a single drinking occasion at least once during the two weeks preceding the survey. Through targeted programs, the Division will be attempting to reduce the percentage of students who are binge drinkers and the frequency of binge drinking.

New Data on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Released in 2001

- Preliminary data from the 2001 Missouri Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), conducted by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, provides information on the use of alcohol and other drugs by Missouri high school students (7). Some of the findings are:
 - ◆ In 2001, 47.6 percent of students in grades 9-12 drank alcohol in the 30 days preceding the survey and were defined as current drinkers. This prevalence rate was a decrease from the 1999 rate of 49.9 percent. Drinking rates for high school seniors decreased five percentage points, dropping from 57.2 percent in 1999 to 52.2 percent in 2001. Nationally, 49.8 percent of high school seniors were current drinkers in 2001, based on the Monitoring the Future Survey. Missouri high school juniors showed the biggest decline in drinking, dropping seven percentage points to 48.4 percent.
 - ◆ The percentage of Missouri high school students engaging in binge drinking increased. Binge drinking in the YRBS is defined as consuming five or more drinks in a row, or within a couple of hours, during the 30 days preceding the survey. Binge drinking rates for grades 9-12 increased from 32.0 percent in 1999 to 34.1 percent in 2001, despite the decrease in the percentage of students who used any alcohol in the preceding 30 days. The ratio of binge drinking to any current drinking was highest for juniors and seniors at 75.4 percent and 76.6 percent, respectively. Binge drinking during the *30 days* preceding the Missouri survey was reported by 40.0 percent of Missouri high school seniors. Nationwide in 2001, 29.7 percent of seniors reported binge drinking during the shorter period of *two weeks* specified in the national survey.
 - ◆ In Missouri, current cigarette smoking among students in grades 9-12 decreased from 32.8 percent in 1999 to 30.3 percent in 2001. The decrease was mainly attributable to high school juniors. In 1999, 38.1 percent of students in eleventh grade reported that they

- were smokers. In 2001, the percentage dropped to 29.6 percent. Cigarette smoking among Missouri high school seniors increased from 33.5 to 35.4 between 1999 and 2001. Nationally, 29.5 percent of seniors were smokers in 2001. Smokeless tobacco use increased between surveys. In 2001, 10.4 percent of Missouri high school students reported current use of smokeless tobacco products. The rate varied little between grades but was highest for sophomores. Among seniors, current smokeless tobacco use is 10.2 percent, compared to 7.8 percent of seniors nationwide.
- ◆ Marijuana use among Missouri high school students decreased slightly between the surveys, with current use declining from 25.6 percent in 1999 to 24.4 percent in 2001. As with cigarette smoking, high school juniors showed the largest reduction in use, dropping from 31.8 percent to 24.8 percent. Use among high school seniors was virtually unchanged at 24.6 percent. Nationally, 22.4 percent of seniors were current marijuana users in 2001. Missouri high school freshmen presented the most notable use rate for marijuana, increasing 3.5 percentage points to 25.8 percent and surpassing the 24.4 percent rate for all high school grades combined.
 - ◆ High school student cocaine use increased from 2.7 percent in 1999 to 3.4 percent in 2001 in Missouri. Seniors had the highest percentage of users at 4.8 percent and exceeded the 2001 national rate of 2.1 percent. Among Missouri sophomores, 1.6 percent used cocaine in the 30 days preceding the 2001 survey, higher than the 2001 national rate of 1.3 percent for tenth grade students.
- In 2000, cigarette smoking among Missouri adults ages 18 and older remained virtually unchanged at 27.2 percent, but Missouri's ranking among all states climbed from sixth to third. Only Kentucky and Nevada have a higher percentage of smokers among the adult population (51).
 - Per capita alcohol consumption among the Missouri population ages 14 and older increased from 2.18 gallons of ethanol to 2.21 gallons in 1998, the year of the most recent available data (53). The increase pushed Missouri above the national per capita consumption rate of 2.19 gallons.
 - Domestic violence reports dropped sharply from 41,215 in 1999 to 37,898 in 2000, an eight percent decrease (31). The 2000 count was 14 percent below the record 44,090 domestic violence reports in 1997.
 - Substance abuse during pregnancy continued to decrease.
 - ◆ The reported number of mothers of newborns who drank during their pregnancies continued a multi-year decline (15). In 2000, maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy was reported for 548 newborns, compared to 619 in 1999. However, maternal alcohol consumption continues to be under-reported.
 - ◆ The reported number of mothers of newborns who smoked during their pregnancies increased from 13,766 in 1999 to 13,955 in 2000, but the reported rate remained unchanged at 18.3 percent (15).
 - ◆ Reported newborns affected by maternal consumption of illicit drugs decreased from 263 births in 1999 to 255 in 2000 (17). Reported cocaine affected births decreased but the number of newborns affected by hallucinogens, principally PCP, increased. Deleterious newborn exposure to illicit drugs is known to be under-reported.

- The dropout rate for high school students in grades 9-12 decreased from 5.4 percent in 2000 to 5.1 percent in 2001 (10). The 2001 rate was the lowest it has been since the 1989-90 school year.
- Reported cases of Hepatitis C are increasing rapidly in Missouri. Missouri recorded 4,884 cases in 2000, compared to 2,474 in 1999 (20). Many are chronic cases, with exposure originating in earlier years, which have gone undetected or unreported. The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that 60 percent of Hepatitis C cases result from injection drug use (57).
- Deaths for medical conditions with an underlying cause of substance abuse totaled 656 in 2000, a decrease from the 679 deaths recorded in 1999 (16). Alcohol related deaths declined from 394 to 324, while drug related deaths increased from 285 to 332.
- In 2000, alcohol related traffic crashes totaled 8,417, a small increase from the 8,381 reported in 1999 (34). This was the first year-to-year increase since 1990, when Missouri recorded 10,910 traffic crashes involving alcohol. This marked the first time in the last decade that the rate of alcohol related crashes per 100,000,000 miles of vehicle travel also increased, from 12.54 in 1999 to 12.58 in 2000. The number of alcohol involved fatal crashes and number of fatalities also increased in 2000 (36).
- Drug related crashes also increased in 2000, climbing from 645 in 1999 to 785 in 2000. The number of people killed in traffic crashes involving drugs was 38, the highest number reported in the past decade (35, 37).
- Law enforcement activity directed at clandestine methamphetamine labs continued to increase. The Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Department of Public Safety's Drug Task Forces, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration reported a total of 1,873 operations involving methamphetamine labs, an increase from 1,679 the previous year (39). Due to joint participation in some of the operations, the number of labs dismantled was fewer than the number of reports.
- In FY2001, a total of 4,293 people entered state prisons due to drug offenses, an increase from 4,014 in FY2000. The total includes new admissions and readmissions. At the end of FY2001 5,907 inmates were in custody for drug offenses and 1,184 for driving while intoxicated. These 7,091 substance abuse offenders comprised one-fourth of all prison inmates (1, 2, 3).
- Admissions to Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse programs for substance abuse and addiction treatment totaled 39,787 in fiscal year 2001 (23).
 - ◆ Treatment admissions for phencyclidine (PCP) reached 187, a 52 percent increase from fiscal year 2000 admissions and twice the 94 PCP admissions in fiscal year 1999.
 - ◆ Among the widely used drugs, marijuana and methamphetamine posted the largest increases in admissions between fiscal years 2000 and 2001 — 7.7 percent and 7.1 percent, respectively. Cocaine admissions increased 4.3 percent and heroin admissions were unchanged. Alcohol continued to be the primary drug of abuse, and the 16,508 admissions in fiscal year 2001 were a 2.6 percent increase over fiscal year 2000 alcohol admissions.